

November 16, 2017

Dear Parents:

As parents, you are the first and most important teachers of the Faith for your child. As your child decides to present themselves for the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation, your influence as a Catholic parent cannot be overstated.

Your child began his or her journey in the Catholic faith when you brought them to the Church for Baptism.

“Baptism, the Eucharist and the sacrament of Confirmation together constitute the ‘sacraments of Christian initiation,’ whose unity must be safeguarded. It must be explained to the faithful that the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. For ‘by the sacrament of Confirmation, [the baptized] are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence, they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed.” (CCC, no. 1285)

“The church must make every effort...to ensure that adolescents do not view their preparation and reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation as the end of their formal catechesis. They must be encouraged to continue to participate in catechetical programs, the celebration of Sunday Eucharist, and the practice of Christian living.” (NDC, 48D)

In 2014, Pope Francis said this about the Sacrament of Confirmation:

“... (and Confirmation)...ensures that our life be embodied in the image of his Son, for us to love like him, infusing his Holy Spirit. The Spirit acts with strength within us, within all people and during one’s whole life...when we receive him in our hearts, Christ makes himself present and takes shape in our lives.”

This packet contains all the information you will need to assist your child on his or her Confirmation Faith Journey.

The Confirmation Ceremony is scheduled for April 27 at 4:00 or 6:30 PM.

The Reverend Monsignor Thomas Mullelly will be the Presider.

Please contact the Office of Religious Education at faithformation@stalphonsushopewell.org or 609-466-2694 if you have any questions or concerns.

God Bless,

Donna Millar, CRE

FACTS YOU SHOULD KNOW

(Based on the Sacrament Guidelines, Diocese of Trenton 2016)

The **effects** of receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation:

- increases and deepens baptismal grace
- unites us more firmly to Christ
- increases the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit within us: wisdom, understanding counsel, knowledge, fortitude, piety and fear of the Lord.
- makes our bond with the church stronger and more perfect
- renders us true witnesses of Christ, able to spread and defend our Catholic faith by word and action

To be **eligible** to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, the candidate:

- must have completed his/her fourteenth year (all 8th grade students who are ready will receive)
- has been suitably instructed preferably with two full years of preparation
- is properly disposed
- is able to renew Baptismal promises

The candidate and his or her family **must be registered** in one of the churches of *The Catholic Community of Hopewell Valley*- St. Alphonsus in Hopewell, St. George in Titusville or St. James in Pennington .

A **copy of the candidate's baptismal certificate** must be on file. You will be notified if you do not have a copy on file.

To show a **readiness** to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation a candidate should demonstrate the following:

- a personal love of Jesus Christ and the church he founded
- an understanding of what happened at Pentecost
- an understanding of the theology as well as an appreciation for the Sacrament of Confirmation
- a knowledge and understanding of the Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit
- a knowledge and practice of the faith consistent with the candidate's age, maturity and intellectual abilities.

To **prepare** to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, the candidate should be able to:

- answer questions about the Faith
- understand the **Liturgy** (Mass) and the Sacraments and **participate regularly** in both
- promote a moral formation in Jesus Christ
- know how to pray with Jesus Christ
- participate actively in the life and mission of the church
- be present as a Christian in society

For a candidate to meet the requirement of eligibility, readiness and preparedness, attendance at classes and other scheduled events is important. Failure to attend classes on a regular basis may indicate an insufficient desire on the part of the candidate to be confirmed at this time. In such cases a candidate may be asked to postpone Confirmation to a later year.

A Confirmation Retreat is a required part of the preparation and each candidate is required to attend the scheduled retreat. If, for some reason the candidate misses the scheduled retreat, they will be required to attend another retreat in the diocese. The Office of Religious Education will provide the information for the make-up retreat.

Your child should know and be able to recite the common prayers-The Sign of the Cross, The Lord's Prayer, The Hail Mary, The Glory Prayer, The Nicene Creed and The Act of Contrition. Additionally, they should know and be able to reiterate: The Ten Commandments, The Seven Sacraments, The Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit, the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy, The Precepts of the Catholic Church and The Beatitudes.

Reconciliation

Candidates are expected to receive God's healing forgiveness and peace through this Sacrament often, especially before receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance, Confession) is available every Saturday at St. Alphonsus Church at 3:15PM, before Mass. In addition, celebrations of Penance are scheduled during Advent and during Lent. A penance Service is scheduled for the Confirmation Class and their families on April 12, 2018 at 7PM.

Sponsor Eligibility

"It is important that a Sponsor be an actively practicing Catholic who participates regularly (weekly) in the Eucharist"

To be eligible as a Sponsor, the following is required:

- Must be 16 years of age and fully initiated (have received Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation) in the Catholic Church.
- If married, must be in a valid Catholic marriage. In all cases, the sponsor's living situation should be in conformity with Catholic morality.
- Cannot be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared.
- May be the Baptismal godparent or a new sponsor.
- May NOT be the candidate's mother or father.
- Must submit a *Letter of Eligibility* from current parish.

Please give the Sponsor Packet to your Sponsor to complete and return by February 8, 2018

A proxy sponsor who meets the same eligibility requirements may stand in for the sponsor if pastoral considerations warrant this.

Name Selection

"The taking of a new name symbolizes embracing a new way of life or a new direction in one's life."

- Candidate may keep his or her Baptismal name.
- Candidate may select the name of a saint.
- No name may be take that is offensive to the Faith.
- The name does not need to be gender consistent.

At the Confirmation Ceremony, all candidates will wear a label with his or her Confirmation Name, for the Presider to read.

The Confirmation Ceremony

“In the Diocese of Trenton... the Sacrament of Confirmation is celebrated outside of Mass according to the approved and prescribed liturgical texts.”

The ceremony will be on Friday, April 27 at 4 or 6:30 PM. All candidates and sponsors must be in the church hall by 3:30 PM for the 4 PM ceremony and 6:00 PM for the 6:30 ceremony. Parents are encouraged to also be in the church at that time. The Presider will process in exactly at 4 or 6:30 PM to begin the ceremony. There will be a limited number of reserved seats per family with additional seating available behind the reserved seats and the candidates and their sponsors. (I will have more details about the seating closer to the ceremony date).

Please notify the office if you have any special needs for guest.

Order of the Rite of Confirmation

Introductory Rites

Liturgy of the Word
First Reading
Psalm
Gospel Acclamation
Gospel
Presentation of Candidates- Pastor
Homily- Bishop

Sacrament of Confirmation

Renewal of Baptismal Promises
Laying on of Hands
Anointing with Chrism
General Intercessions
The Lord's Prayer
(Brief Comments/Announcements)
Concluding Rite- Solemn Blessing/Prayer over the People

Photography

Photographs are NOT permitted during the ceremony. Information about photos after the ceremony will be provided closer to the ceremony date.

Attire

“Dress for receiving this Sacrament should be in keeping with the dignity of the sacramental occasion.”

- Dress of all participants, candidates, sponsors and attendees needs to be modest and suitable for the occasion.
- Boys should wear dress pants, shirt and tie and dress shoes.
- Girls should wear a dress, shirt and blouse and dress shoes.
- Gowns will be worn and provided. (Gowns will be handed out at the last class April 19.)

Confirmation Liturgy

A **separate** Mass of celebration will be held on **Sunday, April 15, 2017** at the 10:30AM Mass. This Mass will also be a Children's Mass led by the eighth-grade class. Students will do the readings, usher, bring up gifts, altar serve and distribute the bulletins after Mass. All family members are invited to attend, including grandparents, godparents and sponsors. There will be a reception after Mass in the Church Hall.

Confirmation Requirements

Service

Jesus came "not to be served, but to serve" (Mt. 20:28). The church is a servant community, and all those accepting full membership into the church are also accepting the responsibility to serve.

One sign of increased maturity is an increase in assuming more responsibility. As a person matures in faith, he or she discovers that responsibilities as a Catholic Christian also increases. It is not enough to know about one's faith -it is also important that we put our faith into action.

Involvement in service demonstrates our awareness of the needs of others, and our willingness to respond to their needs. Service projects are meant to represent the candidate's intention of becoming a full mature member of the servant church and a follower of Christ.

Candidates are **asked to perform four different service projects** for others as part of their preparation for Confirmation. Through these projects, candidates have the opportunity to reach out to others. These services may be performed individually, or in a group; they may serve the needs of neighbors, the parish, or civic groups. These services should be different from the usual good deeds one performs on a regular basis or as a member of a family. Of course, these services are to be offered freely, not accepting any payment for them.

Service Examples: *Altar server; Religious Education aide; helping with the "Breakfast with Santa" activity; helping serve and clean up after church suppers, Donut Sunday; yard work at church or for a senior/ disabled neighbor; shoveling snow; volunteering at a hospital, retirement home, etc.; Christmas caroling; helping with the Loaves and Fishes Program at the Cathedral; collecting food or other necessities for the poor; helping with Vacation Bible School; assisting with the Ecumenical Living Nativity; participation in fundraisers such as the Crop Walk, Multiple Sclerosis, Cancer Awareness, etc.*

If you are unsure if something will count as service, please just ask.

Essay about the Saint's Name they chose for Confirmation

This essay should be approximately one-two paragraphs, single-spaced and typed with 12 pt. font. It should name the saint, when he or she lived and what they did to become a saint. You should explain why you chose this saint's name and the qualities you most admire in this saint's life. Your essay should also contain how you will try to emulate these qualities in your own life.

Essay about your Sponsor

This essay should be approximately one-two paragraphs, single-spaced and typed with 12 pt. font. It should contain the name of your Sponsor and how they are related to your life. You should explain why you chose them as your sponsor especially as it pertains to their faith and how they live it.

Stations of the Cross

The Confirmation Class is scheduled to lead the Stations of the Cross on March 23. We are hoping to continue the tradition of *The Living Stations of the Cross* but we need volunteers to organize and lead this project. If we do *The Living Stations of the Cross*, we are asking the class to perform it again on Palm Sunday, March 25 for Grades 1-6.at 9:15 AM.

Forms and Questionnaires to Complete

(please check when completed)

Copy of Baptism Certificate (if not already on file)	_____
Confirmation Information Form	_____
Sponsor Packet	_____
Sponsor Essay	_____
Confirmation Name/Saint Name Essay	_____
“Holy Spirit” Questionnaire	_____
Four Confirmation Service Reports	_____
\$40 contribution to help defray cost for retreat, robes, flowers etc.	_____

All required paperwork in this packet is to be completed and returned on February 8, 2018

Important Dates

March 23 at 7 PM	Stations of the Cross
March 25 at 9:15 AM	Stations of the Cross
April 12 at 7:00 PM	Penance Service
April 15 at 10 AM	Confirmation Mass
April 26 at 6 PM or 7:20 PM	Confirmation Practice
April 27 at 4 or 6:30 PM	Confirmation Ceremony

Sponsor Packet



Name of Candidate: _____

Name of Sponsor: _____

Date due: Before February 8, 2018

Dear Perspective Sponsor,

Congratulations!

You have received this packet because you have been asked to consider sponsoring someone for Confirmation. Accepting the role of sponsor is an honor and a privilege and carries with it certain responsibilities.

Each Confirmation candidate chooses an individual sponsor as an important part of preparation for Confirmation. This person's role is to walk with the candidate and offer guidance as he or she prepares for Confirmation. Therefore, the sponsor is someone who is already involved in the spiritual formation of the candidate. The sponsor is one who can be available to share his or her faith life and be an example of Christian living, representing the Church by supporting the candidate, praying with the candidate, and challenging him or her to live a Christian life.

On the day of Confirmation, the sponsor will literally stand behind the candidate and confidently present him or her to the bishop, or his representative, as a person ready to be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is a joyful experience for the entire faith community!

Sponsor Eligibility

- 1. At least sixteen years old*
- 2. Completed the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist)*
- 3. An active member of a Catholic parish community*
- 4. Must be present for the Confirmation practice(if possible) and celebration*
- 5. Must not be prohibited by Church Law from exercising the role of Sponsor.*

A Sponsor can be

- 1. The candidate's baptismal sponsor, if desired*
- 2. Either male or female*

Note: A sponsor cannot be the candidate's parent.

I hope this information helps you to better understand the role of the sponsor of a Confirmation candidate. If you say "Yes" to this commitment, complete pages two and three and return this packet to the candidate before February 8, 2018.

May God bless you,

Donna Millar
Office of Faith Formation

SPONSOR ELIGIBILITY FORM

I recognize that in accepting the role of Sacramental Sponsorship I become responsible to be a model and example of a committed and active Catholic.

I, _____, am a registered participating member of
_____ Church and I affirm that:

I am at least sixteen years of age;

I have received the Sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation;

I attend Mass regularly and on designated holy days;

If married, that I am validly married according to the canonical form of the Catholic Church in the Sacrament of Marriage;

I am in a living situation that conforms to Catholic morality.

I am not bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared.

I strive to give witness to my faith in Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and receive Him in Holy Communion as often as possible, and seek God's forgiveness in the Sacrament of Penance as often as necessary;

I consciously strive to live out my Catholic commitment by a loving response to my parish and to others with whom I come into daily contact;

I will give support to the person I am sponsoring by my prayers, and especially by my example of Catholic Christian living.

Name of Sponsor (print)

Signature of Sponsor

Candidate's Name (print)

Pastor/Pastoral Associate Signature

(Parish Seal)

Date

Confirmation Service Report
(Complete for each service)

1. Describe in detail the service you performed. (What, When Where, How long, etc.)

2. Why did you choose this service? _____

3. Name a Spiritual or Corporal Work of Mercy or a Scripture Reading you believe you put into action by performing this service.

4. Comment on any new insights your project inspired in you. Did you learn anything about yourself, and/or God from doing this?

5. Will you continue doing service after Confirmation? Why or why not?

6. Please make any additional comments you would like to share about this service?

Please attach any documentation

Parent Signature

Date

Holy Spirit Questionnaire

Name: _____

1. Please name and define the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____
- f. _____
- g. _____

2. Name and define three of the Fruits of the Holy Spirit.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

3. Describe a time when you used one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

4. Why do you want to be confirmed? _____

5. If you could ask Pope Francis any questions what would you ask?

6. What was your favorite grade in religious education and why?

7. Please share any additional comments you would like to make.

